U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

ONSHORE RENEWABLE ENERGY WORKSHOP

Stewart Lee Udall Department of the Interior Building
Sidney Yates Auditorium
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LISTENING SESSIONS SUMMARIES

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LISTENING SESSION 1
PERMITTING RENEWABLE ENERGY ON PUBLIC LANDS—SMART FROM THE START

Discussion Leaders

Bert Frost, *Associate Director, Natural Resource Stewardship & Science, NPS*
Mike Pool, *Deputy Director, BLM*
Ted Boling, *Counselor to the Assistant Secretary for Land & Minerals Management*
Ray Brady, *Energy Policy Team Manager, BLM*
Mike Nedd, *Assistant Director for Minerals and Realty Management, BLM*
Shannon Stewart, *Senior NEPA Program Lead, BLM*

Listening Session Summary

On March 11, 2009, the Secretary signed Secretarial Order No. 3285, identifying renewable energy as a priority. In May 2009, the Secretary called for the BLM to establish a network of Renewable Energy Coordination Offices to help focus resources on the processing of wind, solar and geothermal energy applications and electrical transmission facilities. To reach this goal, BLM identified Fast Track renewable energy projects for priority processing in 2010 and approved 9 solar projects, 1 wind project, and 2 geothermal projects in 2010. Efforts are currently underway to identify priority projects for processing in 2011 and 2012 to meet renewable energy performance goals and targets. The BLM is committed to facilitating environmentally responsible renewable energy development on public land and to following an orderly process that ensures full public input and environmental protections.

This listening session focused on how the Department can improve coordination with local, state and federal partners in order to address challenges earlier in the application process and focus resources toward "smart-from-the-start" projects that are most likely to be successful. Session attendees discussed ways to implement best practices to improve the timeliness of the permitting process and ways to acquire existing data that can enhance Department decision making.

This session highlighted the need for all entities—federal, state, and non-governmental—to work closely early in the permitting process to address potential conflicts before proponents makes substantial investments. Attendees recommended a stronger working relationship with DoD and FAA throughout the permitting process and bringing the public into the process earlier. Improved coordination among states and tribes is encouraged. Policy should express the environmental and public health benefits of renewable energy. Finally, there is a need for comparative analysis, cost-recovery agreements, and generation and transmission considerations in the permitting process.

Key Themes

- This session provided an opportunity for BLM to share more information about the three Instructional Memos announced prior to the Onshore Renewable Energy Workshop.
- The session also provided an opportunity for BLM and other Department officials to hear ideas directly from our partners about how to continue making renewable energy on public lands smart from the start.
- Early consultation on renewable energy projects has been taking place across Interior and BLM and NPS shared that story.
- The Department's partners would like to see more communication, early consultation and interagency coordination.
- However, there seems to be a general sense that the Department is moving in the right direction.

Action Items

- Encourage all parties to clearly define purpose and need early and verify often.
- Increase interagency coordination.
- Encourage Field Offices to reach out to military base commanders and have regular coordination on renewable energy.
- Think about ways to identify mitigation needs and areas earlier in the process.
- Look into big transmission corridors that evolved in southern California—many segments of which were controversial—and find where DOI can get involved in the interconnection planning process.

LISTENING SESSION 2
PERMITTING RENEWABLE ENERGY ON PRIVATE LANDS—ESA

Discussion Leaders
Gary Frazer, *Assistant Director for Endangered Species, FWS*
Michael Fris, *Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, Pacific Southwest Region, FWS*

Listening Session Summary

Protecting endangered species and their habitat is an important goal that must be achieved as co-equal to the goal of increasing production of renewable energy pursuant to the mandate in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and in DOI Secretarial Order 3285. Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act allows for permitting the incidental take of endangered species resulting from otherwise lawful private activities, based on the development and approval of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The Fish and Wildlife Service works with project developers, state and local governments, and others to continually innovate and improve the process of siting, evaluating, and permitting renewable energy projects on private lands.

This listening session focused on ways in which project developers, state and local governments, and the Service can work together to 1) minimize impacts to listed species through effective project siting and design, 2) reduce the time commitment and uncertainty associated with developing and permitting an HCP for renewable energy development on private land, and 3) identify strategies or technologies that may be used to support renewable energy development by avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating impacts on listed species and their habitats.

Attendees noted that ESA should not be perceived as an impediment to renewable energy development. One way to ensure that ESA is not seen as an impediment is to conduct ESA consultation early in the permitting process so that listed species conflicts are identified before substantial time and money is invested in a project. Attendees stressed the importance of streamlining the HCP process and increasing consistency in the process across regional and field offices. Attendees agreed that FWS is cognizant of the challenges to permitting on private lands, but needs more resources to better assist developers in addressing those challenges. Finally, there was a consensus that increased data sharing is ideal, and that many elements facilitate data sharing, but attendees acknowledged that industry is still hesitant to make its data public when it feels that it has little protection under laws like MBTA.

Key Themes

- The FWS supports renewable energy.
- Early consultation and coordination is key.
    - Companies want to engage with FWS early in order to move through the process more quickly.
    - What are the best ways to augment FWS/ developer participation in the pre-application consultation process so everyone understands what data is needed?

    - Bring in DOD and other partners earlier too.
- There was a general sense that FWS needs more resources to dedicate to renewable energy.
- Timely, complete information and data exchange between FWS, developers and other interested stakeholders is essential to efficient processing of applications.

Action Items

- Explore ideas for structuring early consultation to ensure that developers and the Service get the most out of it.
- FWS and BLM will work on expanding pilot offices from the Energy Policy Act.
- FWS will explore ideas to increase resources, for example: reimbursable agreements, permit application fees.
- FWS will also explore other mechanisms for ESA compliance like a section 4d rule.

LISTENING SESSION 3
BALD AND GOLDEN EAGLE PROTECTION ACT AND MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY ACT

Discussion Leaders
Matt Hogan, *Assistant Regional Director for Migratory Birds, Mountain-Prairie Region, FWS*
Brian Millsap, *National Eagle Coordinator, FWS*
Paul Schmidt, *Assistant Director for Migratory Birds, FWS*

Listening Session Summary

The Service published final regulations under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) in September 2009, providing the first opportunity/process to allow for unintentional take of eagles since the BGEPA was passed in 1940. These regulations include a process for the Service to issue permits to take bald and golden eagles where the take is associated with, but not the purpose of an otherwise lawful activity. Since publication of the final regulation, wind power development has increased significantly, particularly in the core range of golden eagles in the western United States. Wind power guidelines and Eagle Conservation Plan guidance have been recently published to help provide a roadmap that allows a developer, where appropriate to the resource, to meet eagle take permit requirements as long as the take of golden eagles can be compensated for in the breeding population.

This listening session focused on the ways in which the Service should balance renewable energy goals with protection of eagles in accordance with the law and the way in which the Service should employ the two new documents to address challenges to minimizing the take of eagles. This session also discussed science that should be developed to address unanswered questions and strategies or technologies that could be used to minimize the take of eagles. Finally, session attendees discussed barriers or incentives to using best management practices to minimize the impact of renewable energy development on eagles.

Attendees stressed that there is a need for more data on the cumulative impact on eagle population levels and thus there is a need for greater monitoring. Increased on impacts and monitoring will help reduce the current uncertainty regarding the impact of wind projects on eagle populations. Attendees also noted that frequent and close coordination between FWS and project proponents is critical to ensuring that Eagle Conservation Plans are successful.

Key Themes

- Draft Eagle Conservation Plan Guidance provide recommendations for the development of *Eagle Conservation Plans* (ECPs) and are specific to the support for issuance of eagle programmatic take permits for wind facilities.
- To comply with the permit regulations, conservation measures must avoid and minimize take of eagles to the maximum degree possible.

- The Guidance does not impose any binding requirements beyond those already specified in the regulations.
- Adaptive management process of the Guidance is designed to reduce uncertainty of the effects to eagles of wind facilities
- The Eagle Conservation Plans and the guidance will help to gather information through adaptive management – Monitoring is an important component to any permitted project (continued monitoring helps us learn more and make adjustments as needed as wind energy is developed). More monitoring and resources are needed to address this uncertainty. Concern about multi energy projects in concentrated area and the cumulative impacts on eagle populations call attention to the need for more information on population levels and the need for more resources for monitoring (surveys).
- Frequent close coordination from outset is beneficial to both Service and project proponents and helps ensure the Eagle Conservation Plans meet the needs and requirements of all parties (including the eagles!)

Action Items

- Attendees invited to participate in public comment period. Attendees asked to contact Jerome Ford with questions.

LISTENING SESSION 4
WIND TURBINE GUIDELINES

Discussion Leaders
Dan Ashe, *Deputy Director, FWS*
Jeff Underwood, *Deputy Assistant Director, Fisheries & Habitat Conservation, FWS*
Bryan Arroyo, *Assistant Director for Fisheries & Habitat Conservation, FWS*
David Cottingham, *Senior Advisor to the Director, FWS*

Listening Session Summary

The Wind Turbine Guidelines are intended to provide a structured approach to the conservation of wildlife and habitat while planning, developing and operating wind energy facilities.

This session focused on the ways in which the Guidelines differ from the FAC recommendations and the relationship between the Guidelines and the Eagle Conservation Plan Guidelines. Session attendees also discussed possible incentives to industries to follow the Guidelines. Finally, attendees discussed suggested standards for pre-construction monitoring.

Attendees were split on whether they preferred voluntary guidelines or regulation. Those who supported voluntary guidelines believed that this approach would be consistent with the 2003 Interim Guidelines and that a voluntary approach allows the opportunity for lessons learned. Those who preferred regulation believed regulation would allow greater certainty. FACA members was concerned that FWS replaced its guideline recommendations with FWS own judgment, and FWS assured members that it maintained the vast majority of the FACA's recommendations while taking into consideration the concerns of other agencies. Attendees discussed the schedule for processing comments on the guidelines and the resources the will go toward protocols for monitoring. This session also discussed the ways in which onshore wind energy development can be used to advise the development of offshore wind energy.

Key Themes

- The Service encourages groups and individuals to submit constructive, detailed comments on the draft Land-based Wind Energy Guidelines during the 90-day comment period.
- Many members of the Wind Turbine Guidelines Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) are concerned that the draft guidelines do not match the FAC recommendations.
- Wind energy proponents expressed their interest in good coordination and consultation throughout the FWS.

Action Items

- The FWS committed to working with States, other Federal agencies, and stakeholders on the Wind Turbine guidelines.
- The Service will meet with interested groups during the comment period to discuss the Draft Guidelines. At the close of the comment period, the Service will review comments received.
- The Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife Service should closely coordinate on wind energy guidelines applicable to Forest Service lands.

LISTENING SESSION 5
CHALLENGES FACING TRIBES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY ON TRIBAL LANDS

Discussion Leaders
Mike Black, *Director of Bureau of Indian Affairs*
Janie Hipp, *Senior Advisor for Tribal Affairs & Director, Office of Tribal Relations, USDA*
Del Laverdure, *Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, DOI Indian Affairs*
Tracey LeBeau, *Director of Office of Indian Energy Policy & Programs, DOE*

Listening Session Summary

President Obama, Secretary Salazar, and Secretary Chu have made development of renewable energy resources on tribal lands a priority. Tribal lands are home to some of the richest renewable energy resources in the United States, whether it is wind, solar, hydro, geothermal, or biomass. To date, however, there have been few successful tribal efforts to generate power from renewable resources on tribal lands.

This listening session focused on how federal agencies can work with tribal nations to identify and overcome obstacles to the development of renewable energy projects on tribal lands. Attendees also discussed what administrative options federal agencies have to support tribal renewable energy development, including possible changes to federal regulations that could improve opportunities for tribal renewable energy development. Finally, this session discussed financial incentives and technical assistance that the federal government could offer to encourage tribal renewable energy development.

Attendees discussed the possibility of securing more tribal land for renewable energy and increasing tribal land holdings to provide tribes with more marketable renewable energy resources. Attendees acknowledged that agencies must improve their coordination and compliment each other's work to effectively implement tribal renewable energy programs. To aid tribes in attracting privately-owned enterprises to purchase tribal renewable energy, market tax credits and Clean Renewable Energy Bonds could be used. Attendees discussed financial incentives to encourage tribal renewable energy development, including DOE's $2 billion loan program, DOE's Energy Block Grant Program, USDA's B-CAP program, and USDA's Rural Energy of America Program.

Key Themes

- How to get beyond feasibility studies to actually building projects.
- USDA and DOE are in the process of assessing their capabilities. Is there a need to develop new offices?
- The importance of balancing tribal interests and identities with development.
- There is a need for more transmission to tribal lands.

Action Items

- Develop sound business practices with strategic partnerships among the federal government, developers, and state PUCs to develop renewable energy and transmission on tribal lands.
- Explore ways the federal government can incentivize energy development on tribal lands.
- Assist tribes in assessing transmission.
- Work together to continue improving consultation.

LISTENING SESSION 6
LANDSCAPE-LEVEL PLANNING—ECOREGIONAL ASSESSMENTS, SOLAR PEIS, DRECP & LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION COOPERATIVES

Discussion Leaders
Gabriela Chavarria, *Science Advisor to the Director, FWS*
Leslie Honey, *Vice President for Conservation Services, NatureServe*
Kit Muller, *Strategic Planner, BLM*
Terry O'Brien, *Deputy Director of Siting, Transmission & Environmental Protection Division, CEC*
Michael Powelson, *Director of Agency Relations, Western U.S., The Nature Conservancy*
Linda Resseguie, *Realty Specialist, BLM*

Listening Session Summary

Landscape-level planning is designed to provide information to decision-makers based on sound science. This listening session focused on the role of landscape-level planning in the siting of renewable energy facilities.

Discussion in this listening session focused on efforts underway to address landscape-level planning. Attendees discussed ways to include public and private lands in large-scale planning efforts, such as the Solar PEIS. The discussion focused on the role of NGOs, industry, and academia, and sought to identify discrete programs responsible for landscape-level planning within state and federal agencies. Finally, session attendees discussed ways to assess cumulative effects on a landscape-level.

Attendees in this listening session agreed that landscape-level planning is an approach whose time has come because we can no longer operate on a project-by-project basis. Attendees identified a data gap. To address this data gap we need to ensure that we are asking the right questions to spur the right data collection, create a central repository for data, develop a data-refresher mechanism, and develop monitoring guidelines and programs that will enable us to collect data from project areas and control sites that will facilitate impact analysis. Attendees acknowledged that data gathering could never be perfect, so we need to continue to manage risk.

Session attendees found that there is a need for more zones and smaller zones in order to respond to transmission issues, but cautioned that a zone only process could relegate utility-scale solar energy to boutique energy rather than mainstream technology. Finally, stakeholders recognized that there has been unprecedented coordination among federal agencies and renewable energy stakeholders, and that this coordination must continue to ensure that renewable energy becomes mainstream.

Key Themes

Landscape-level Processes

- LCCs originally designed to address climate change, but focus has broadened. Not established for renewable energy analysis per se, but can be a vital tool, e.g. in the development of decision support tools. Industry is invited to join LCC steering committees and provide input.
- NatureServe (as example) informs Fed. Agencies' landscape-level processes, e.g. FWS Refuge vulnerability assessments for climate change, assisting with rapid-response mindset. NatureServe has in-born capacity to feed Smart from the Start urgency so conservation is not left behind and so best available information is brought to bear… "Smart to the End"
- Ecoregional Assessments are done across U.S. to identify where biodiversity investments are made; key to making land-use decisions. Process is critical, but not difficult with new, more sophisticated tools.

Zoning

- No other energy sectors are limited to zones, e.g. coal, oil/gas. Why should solar, geo, others be limited to zones?
- A sophisticated zoning of landscape is needed to head off train wrecks, e.g. for sage grouse.
- Our plans should provide clear incentives to go to the "yes-build" areas. Thus we're getting steel in the ground more quickly, but in the right places.

Data

- Data cannot be static. Must be an "automatic refresh" mechanism to maintain as current.
- How do we best pull together the disparate analyses so we can array the choices for decision-makers?
- Filling the data gaps makes for better decisions.
- Is there a single source that aggregates these many data processes?

Cumulative Impacts

- We always tap-dance around cumulative impacts. How do we leverage these processes to get at cumulative impacts for golden eagle, for example, under BGEPA, but also sage grouse and other spp. affected by *fragmentation*?

National Priorities

- Ask about impacts, but also ask what happens if we don't do the project. Look at both sides.

Action Items

Missing

LISTENING SESSION 7
CONSULTATION - TRIBAL, NHPA, SECTION 106

Discussion Leaders
Robin Burgess, *Federal Preservation Officer, BLM*
John Fowler, *Executive Director, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation*
Jodi Gillette, *Deputy Assistant Secretary, Policy & Economic Development—Indian Affairs*
Will Shafroth, *Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish & Wildlife & Parks*

Listening Session Summary

Promoting the development of renewable energy is a national priority. An equal priority is the protection of historic and cultural resources, including tribal resources. The relationship between American Indian tribes and the Federal government is defined by the trust responsibility of the United States government to the tribes and the requirement that federal agencies consult with tribes in a government to government manner. This listening session presented an opportunity to brainstorm ways to ensure that permitting agencies, the historic preservation community, and tribal governments engage in meaningful consultation and to ensure that the concerns expressed by the tribal and historic preservation communities are addressed.

Discussions in this listening session focused on the concerns of tribal and historic preservation communities, the nature and practice of government to government consultation; the difference between tribal, historic preservation office, and agency understandings of site, resource or landscape significance; expectations for outcomes from the consultation process; and how effective consultation may lead to successful projects that address the concerns of tribal and historic preservation communities.

Attendee discussions in this listening session centered around three areas: elements of a successful consultation process, impediments to the consultation process, and solutions to these impediments. Elements of successful consultation that attendees identified include mutual respect and trust; including tribes early in the process; sufficient funding for tribes, THPOs, and federal agencies; effective consultation at the field office level; site vetting before developers invest significant amounts of time and money; and transparency. Impediments to a successful consultation process include the broad scope and large number of projects on the fast track, which overwhelms tribes and federal agencies; a lack of proposed alternatives; a need for improved coordination among state, federal, and tribal governments; frequent staff turnover in federal agencies; and a lack of federal and tribal resources. Proposed solutions coming out of the listening session included a uniform consultation process that everyone agrees upon; improved guidance on consultation; making information more readily available; support for tribes to help tribes participate more effectively in the process; and respect for tribal differences.

Key Themes

- Some keys to making the consultation process work are: mutual respect, inclusion of tribal governments early in the process, building effective working relationships, transparency and trust. Field managers have an important role to play here.
- More funding is needed for Tribes and THPOs to work through the process.
- Awareness of unique tribal difference will aid in completion of tribal cultural clearance work.

Action Items

- Develop a known and agreed upon consultation process early.
- Make sure basic project information is available via websites and brochures that are easily accessible.

LISTENING SESSION 8
INTEGRATING TRANSMISSION CONSIDERATIONS & TRANSMISSION PLANNING

Discussion Leaders
Robert Cunningham, *Assistant Director for Land Stewardship, U.S. Forest Service*
Lucas Lucero, *Branch Chief, Rights-of-Way, BLM*
David Meyer, *Designated Federal Officer of the Electricity Advisory Committee, DOE*

Listening Session Summary

Congress, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Energy, and the Department of Agriculture, among others, have all made renewable energy development and improving our electrical grid high priorities. DOI and USDA, through its agencies and bureaus, manage the public lands and forests in the United States. These lands will continue to play an integral role in facilitating improvements to our electrical grid. DOE is a partner in those efforts and a leader in working to improve transmission planning. Significant successes in transmission planning in the past two years include the release of a final programmatic EIS in 2008 on energy transmission corridors and the first-ever Memorandum of Understanding among nine federal agencies in 2009 to expedite transmission projects on federal lands.

This listening session focused on identifying and prioritizing challenges to siting and permitting of electrical transmission and opportunities for improvement. Attendees also focused on the importance of agencies and industry coordinating early to ensure successful transmission outcomes.

Attendees acknowledged that planning and siting are two different processes and that planning must inform the siting process. Transmission planning also differs from land use planning, so industry should do its homework to ensure that it understands the process and clearly communicate throughout the process. Session attendees stressed that early engagement does not have to slow down transmission planning and siting. Proposed solutions to address challenges include greater involvement by FERC, seeking technology advances, using pre-scoping to increase public involvement in the process, increasing data sharing, and testing grid efficiency before undertaking new projects.

Key Themes

- Transmission siting is an iterative process which requires creative thinking, flexibility and long-term commitment.
- The transmission being planned must connect renewable energy development to the places where the electricity is needed while trying to capitalize on efficiencies to be gained from existing capacity.
- Continue the dialogue between agencies through the FERC-led transmission siting MOU, dated October 28, 2009

- The earlier a broad set of interested parties can be included, the better.
    - It is important to involve FERC early in the process.

Action Items

- Look into expanding the number of transmission corridors at the same time as directing proponents to existing corridors that have capacity.
- The transmission planning process could be improved; will ask the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to review the process and potentially bring more stakeholders to the table.

LISTENING SESSION 9
MINIMIZING IMPACTS OF RENEWABLE ENERGY & ACHIEVING EFFICIENT, ENDURING MITIGATION IN THE DESERTS

Discussion Leaders
Anne Baker, *Senior Advisor, CEERT*
Kim Delfino, *California Program Director, Defenders of Wildlife*
Arthur Haubenstock, *Chief Counsel and Director, Regulatory Affairs, BrightSource Energy*
Mark Kramer, *Associate Director Federal Government, TNC*
Michael Picker, *Senior Advisor for Renewable Energy Facilities, California Governor's Office*

Listening Session Summary

There are significant efforts within the United States dedicated to facilitating a transition to renewable energy in response to the urgent threat of climate change, our need to become energy independent, and the opportunity to create green jobs for Americans. To accomplish these goals, Congress and the Administration have provided economic incentives for development of renewable energy and associated transmission via the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) and other legislation. The California deserts provide a key example of the challenge to develop renewable energy quickly while also protecting sensitive natural resources and balancing the many uses of stakeholders. If an approach for meeting these various and sometimes competing needs can be developed in California, it could have broad application across the southwest and beyond.

This listening session focused on the ways in which DOI and its stakeholders can work together to facilitate development in areas where there are high renewable energy resources and low natural resource conflicts. This session also focused on ways to facilitate ESA compliance on private lands and the best ways to increase mitigation opportunities on private and public lands.

Attendees noted that the fact that high value conservation lands are located primarily on public lands provides the opportunity to use these lands for mitigation measures that will inform mitigation measures on private lands. To that end, the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan will provide a conservation strategy for the California Desert. Attendees discussed the need to use "mitigation banks" as the conservation strategy on public lands to ensure long-term mitigation and conservation, but industry cautioned that long-term financial models for wind and solar projects are difficult to predict and that the structure of compensatory mitigation for future projects may change over time. These mitigation banks must be public/private/state partnerships to avoid management of these accounts as federal funds. Challenges to encouraging siting solar projects on private rather than public land include the difficulty of assembling large blocks of land in multiple land ownerships. Attendees discussed the challenges specific to siting solar projects in California, including the Williamson Act's restriction on the use of farm lands for other uses and the shift from a CEC and CEQA process to private land a PV projects that necessitates greater involvement by counties.

Key Themes

- Adequate mitigation of unavoidable project impacts is essential.
- This mitigation should be directly tied to the impacts and the mitigation should be transparent.
- The Department and its partners should explore a wide range of mitigation tools including mitigation banks.

Action Items

Missing

LISTENING SESSION 10
IMPROVING THE PERMITTING PROCESS—LESSONS LEARNED IN 2010

Discussion Leaders
Michael Mantell, *Attorney, Resources Law Group*
Johanna Wald, *Senior Attorney, NRDC*
Peter Weiner, *Partner, Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker LLP*

Listening Session Summary

The California Desert Renewable Energy Working Group has developed a set of recommendations for improving the permitting process based on their experiences with the "Fast Track" projects in 2009 and 2010. These recommendations are focused on BLM lands in California, but may be much more broadly applicable. In this listening session, leaders from the CDREWG explored ideas for improving planning and permitting for the next generation of renewable energy projects.

This session focused on several means by which to improve the permitting process. These means included ways to reduce speculation in solar right-of-way applications, improving criteria for screening applications, and increasing the ways in which stakeholders can provide input. Attendees also discussed ways to improve environmental reviews, standardize mitigation procedures, and standardize requirements for scientific monitoring. Finally, this session focused on ways to improve communication and collaboration among and between stakeholders and agencies and help projects meet the 2011 Treasury grant deadline while still moving toward landscape-level planning.

Attendees noted that the CDREWG initially focused on solar energy but that the group needs to focus on all renewable energies and infrastructure. This session highlighted the letter to DOI recommending new criteria for screening permit applications. These recommended criteria include identifying and supporting good projects; early, broad stakeholder outreach; mandating quality and consistency in EISs and EAs; clear and consistent standards for mitigation and scientific monitoring; and improving coordination among and between agencies and departments.

Key Themes

- There is a need to delineate and support good projects. There is also a need to define what a "good" project is.
- Early and broad stakeholder outreach is important,
- The group would like to see clear and consistent standards for mitigation procedures, NEPA documents, and scientific monitoring.

Action Items

- Consider revisiting the screening criteria—should a megawatt size screen be included, for example?
- Continue to share lessons learned
- Continue to improve coordination among and between agencies and departments.

LISTENING SESSION 11
EXPANDING RENEWABLE ENERGY OPPORTUNITIES AT INTERIOR

Discussion Leaders
Mike Connor, *Director, Bureau of Reclamation*
Wendy Fink, *Counselor to the Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas*
Jim Kenna, *Arizona State Director, BLM*
Fred Pease, *Department of Defense Liaison to the Department of the Interior*

Listening Session Summary

Secretary Salazar has set the Department of the Interior on a path to lead the government in securing America's energy future by moving our nation toward a clean-energy economy. Interior is changing the way we do business by opening our doors to responsible development of renewable energy on our public lands and facilitating environmentally appropriate renewable-energy projects involving solar, wind and waves, geothermal, biofuels and hydropower. These resources, developed in the right ways and the right places, will help curb our dependence on foreign oil, reduce our use of fossil fuels and promote new industries here in America. This listening session highlighted four initiatives to further expand energy opportunities: sustainable hydropower development and renewable energy integration in Reclamation operations; the Arizona Restoration and Design project, which may be expanded to other areas; the development of mission compatible renewable energy on BLM lands withdrawn for DoD use; and two current Office of Insular Affairs initiatives: the Energy Development in Island Nations and the partnership with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

This listening session focused on the most effective approaches to developing projects, the management process and policies needed to facilitate initiatives, the factors that have spurred these initiatives, and whether these factors vary from state to state.

Attendees discussed the ongoing work to investigate the potential for integrating wind and solar energy into reclamation lands. To promote technology to realize this potential, DOE and DOI plan to release a funding opportunity in March 2011 for a technology demonstration. BLM emphasized that the bureau is focusing on finding "yes" sites to facilitate development. Attendees noted the importance of sharing information to help identify "yes" sites and to conserve resources. BLM also noted a concern about tribal staff being overworked with consultation requests; one way to address this challenge is to consult with tribes early. Attendees identified challenges to renewable energy development in the Pacific and Virgin Islands, including the fact that this is a low-margin business for developers and that there is a culture of fossil fuel dependence in insular areas. There is a need to reduce the upfront costs to reduce risk and thus encourage development; one way to do this is to create wind and solar maps for territories. Finally, attendees addressed the development of renewable energy on DoD lands and challenges to development, including lawsuits that stall projects.

Key Themes

- There are many opportunities to expand renewable energy at the Department of the Interior beyond the work being done at BLM.
- Many of these issues involve better communications.
- There is a need to move beyond a project by project view of renewable and towards a bigger picture view and that is already happening. Arizona, for example, is a state-wide look.
- Looking at project sites early and gathering relevant data is key.
- The upside of projects like the Arizona Restoration and Design project is that they are "Ownership Neutral" so any type of land data can be layered in.
- The Federal and state governments need to push opportunity to developers and share information so work is not being duplicated.
- For DoD renewable energy development, there needs to be a more clear effort to address the purpose and use of withdrawn BLM lands to avoid a situation like the Chocolate Mountains.
- In Insular Areas, there needs to be a high awareness of the culture of fossil fuel and the lack of infrastructure for projects.
- On Tribal Lands, Tribal Leaders need to be consulted early and directly.
- Plans sound great, but drive is the market, so it comes down to economics.

Action Items

- Federal side has a project vision and needs to be more pro-active, not play an adjuratory role.
- There needs to be more sharing of information so resources are not wasted.
- Examine whether a project can be grandfathered in where tax breaks/deals/incentives are in place and the project may qualify if it breaks ground by a particular date but a lawsuit stalls the project.
- Work on joint assurance policies with developers for renewable projects on withdrawal land since DOD can only get Congressional approval for 20 years at a time.
- Work on a mitigation strategy for radar issues from wind turbines to shut wind turbines down during non-peak hours.